



**THE JOURNAL  
OF  
THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY**

Property of  
**Graduate Theological Union**

FEB 2 1989

**Volume 15, Number 4  
Winter 1988  
ISSN : 0263 - 0907**



## THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY

THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is a training monastery and retreat centre following the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C. Shasta Abbey is the headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Soto Zen Church and is located in Mount Shasta, California. The monks of Throssel Hole Priory are members of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and follow the teaching and example of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett.

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THE JOURNAL OF THE ORDER OF BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIVES is published quarterly by the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives at its headquarters, Shasta Abbey, P.O. Box 199, Mt. Shasta, California, 96067; telephone (916) 926 4208. Subscription rates are \$18 U.S. surface rate and \$25 U.S. Airmail and should be sent in U.S. dollars to the Editor of the Journal of the O.B.C. at the above address.

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Volume 15, Number 4, Winter 1988  
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Printed in England

# News from the Tiger's Lair



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(News from the Tiger's Lair is reprinted from the *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Volume 3, Number 3, and appears here with the kind permission of the author Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C., Abbess of Shasta Abbey).

## On Electing Presidents.

In a presidential election year it appears to me that the following article, found in the Christian Science Monitor and reprinted by us here through their kindness, might be of use to us in this country since we might like to see what sort of politician, and what type of issues, endear a political leader to Buddhists. After the Nixon and Reagan regimes, which have certainly left this writer wondering about the political image presented by candidates to the rest of the world as well as to the average American, the actions and religious outlook spoken of in this article are refreshing.

The Governor of Bangkok, here described, is not someone with an unblemished past as his enemies and critics are quick to point out in the article. All Buddhists know they must recognise that change is possible in the human spirit just as much as it is possible in the seasons around them, in the times in which they live, in the opinions which they once held

and now no longer hold. What a Buddhist has to do is live in the now when voting for a head of state, and know that karma will take care of his or her past shortcomings for it is not for a Buddhist to usurp, either in opinion or action, the duties of the Eternal. True democracy, as I understand it, does not turn "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" into "the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of personal and/or party greed." So long as one turns this right into the "pursuit of greed" there can never be true democracy; - and greed, personal or otherwise, is totally contrary to Buddhism.

Whatever the Governor may have done in the ignorance of his earlier life, the fact that he has now converted and is attempting to do something about the greed in himself and others that so often passes for democracy makes him a unique and, to my mind, a highly valuable politician.

I am not advocating that we build a small shack for the President and do not keep the White House or any of the other symbols of American politics, only that there are other ways of leadership and dedication than those we have seen in recent years. We can make a country, already democratic, not only more democratic still but more caring, thinking and less inclined to judgementalism. Tit for tat, revenge, - the hunting for an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth - these are not the way of Buddha - they are not justice. Persons in religion or politics, as we have seen recently with some of the T.V. evangelists and political candidates who have confessed their sins openly and are now attempting genuine repentance, should, if I understand Christianity aright, be accepted back in the fold and not stigmatised and pilloried in the media or elsewhere for what they have done, nor should they be discarded. I, of course, am no Christian theologian but, just from reading the Christian gospels, forgiveness and acceptance would seem to be what the leader of Christianity was advocating. It is not for us as Buddhists, as I said earlier, to tear up a person for what he or she may or

may not have done in the past if he or she has genuinely converted and is now following the Precepts; nor should we, if one day that person becomes unconverted, continue to follow him or her - there is such a thing as trust otherwise there is no hope for the future. We will never find any person in existence who has never done something we do not like. Here is the article.

## BANGKOK GOVERNOR IS DOG'S BEST FRIEND. (')

Though lenient toward stray mutts  
he's tough on mangy politics.

Mr. Clayton Jones

Stray dogs in Bangkok have a new leash, er..., lease on life these days. It comes courtesy of the city's governor, whose orthodox Buddhist ways are creating ripples in Thailand politics, especially before an election on Sunday.

Under a recent order of Gov. Chamlong Srimuang, roving mutts are no longer killed at the city pound after being collared. Rather, they finish out their days - neutered, nourished and nestled - at a doggy haven in the countryside.

Such a virtuous act, based on Governor Chamlong's religious belief in the kindred spirit of animal and human life, typifies the unusual conscientious style that has endeared him to Bangkok citizens since he won office in 1985.

Now the puritan politician is trying to transfer his urban popularity and Buddhist ideas into a new national party, known as Moral Force. Organised only this May, it has put together the largest number of candidates of any party for Sunday's election of a new parliament.

"Buddhism must make politics better for the country," says the former military general, who

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practises an ascetic, Gandhi-like life style, including vegetarianism and abstinence from sex.

Mr. Chamlong's visual trademarks are an astronaut's crew cut, a wide toothy smile, and a drab, collarless peasant shirt. But his political trademarks in this largely Buddhist nation are humility, honesty, and hard work.

These traits are considered such a rarity in Thailand's down-and-dirty politics that Moral Force is expected to win up to 10 percent of the 357 seats at stake, if only for its novelty in an otherwise lacklustre election. Chamlong's appeal may lie in a search among many Thais for traditional values amid disenchantment with an industrialised, Westernised life.

The party's debut is just a dress rehearsal for the next election, Chamlong's advisers say. Moral Force leaders have no illusions that they can quickly reverse the thinking of poor, rural voters who still regard the country's nascent democracy as a way to pump money and favours from politicians on the stump.

Chamlong projects himself as Mr. Clean who, with religious conviction, attacks widespread government corruption and vote-buying, and tends to classify public officials as either "good" or "bad."

But he admits that he comes from a dark past - one which, since his commitment to Buddhism in the late 1970s, he'd rather forget but which his political opponents won't let him.

His critics, who call him "half man, half monk," see him as the "Ayatollah of Thailand," mixing fanatical religion with politics. A closer analogy for this soldier-priest may be Oliver Cromwell, the 17th-century English general known for righteous attacks on a rump Parliament.

Chamlong describes Thai politics as "disgusting," especially the practice of members of Parliament vying ruthlessly to head up a Cabinet ministry where they can siphon off public funds or take bribes - primarily to earn back the money spent buying votes.

"If they can't be a minister, then they plot to overthrow the government," he says.

As a child growing up in a poor family, Chamlong says, he took little interest in the philosophy of Buddha, the sixth-century BC prophet who preached that human desires, as the source of sorrows, must be reduced to achieve enlightenment.

The young Chamlong took delight in animal fights, especially between fish. At the elitist Thai military academy, he graduated with top honours, going on to "kill communists," he says, in Vietnam and Laos. In 1976, as a military officer disguised as a civilian, he worked with right-wing groups during political turbulence leading to a bloody Oct. 6 military coup in Bangkok.

After 1979, when democracy began to be restored, Chamlong was appointed secretary-general to the new prime minister, Gen. Prem Tinsulanond. His new-found Buddhist faith compelled him to resign a year later, however, in opposition to a pro-abortion measure.

Rather than withdraw from the world, as many dedicated Buddhists advocate, Chamlong engages it. And rather than see democracy as competition among self interests, he wants to shape it to suppress human desires.

Avoidance of any killing, such as dogs, has become a centrepiece of his Bangkok administration. But he can still play rough with corrupt officials, push through anti-flooding projects (the city is sinking), clean up littered streets, and create his own police force to crack down on illegal builders or lawless sidewalk vendors. [pavement sellers ?]

Chamlong's boosters in Bangkok are almost as zealous as his faith. Taxi drivers are known to throw out passengers who criticise him.

He is regarded by many who work with him as autocratic and sensitive to criticism. He keeps a dedicated inner circle of former military colonels, a reformist group known as the Young Turks who led an unsuccessful coup in 1981.

His party, known as Phalang Dharma in Thai, is seen by many voters as favouring the retention of Mr. Prem as prime minister, a perception that may cost it votes in anti-Prem Bangkok.

"It's hard for me to criticise this prime minister," Chamlong says.

Chamlong is not running for a parliamentary seat, only leading the party. He promises to finish out his term as governor, although he has put up his wife as a candidate against his leading opponent in Bangkok. Not an eloquent speaker, he still shows a flair for publicity. He invites children, for instance, to write him letters in a newspaper, answering them as "Uncle Chamlong."

His other, better known inner circle is radically different from the Young Turks. These are his fellow Buddhists in a sect known as Peace Asoke, which practises an extreme frugality and austerity.

Rivalry among Buddhist sects, sometimes over such issues as whether to shave off one's eyebrows, has prevented a wholesale support for Moral Force from the nation's monks.

Nonetheless, Chamlong's life style finds public appeal. His sect runs a vegetarian restaurant and resells donated goods to poor people at "amazingly" cheap prices ("amazing") has become his label).

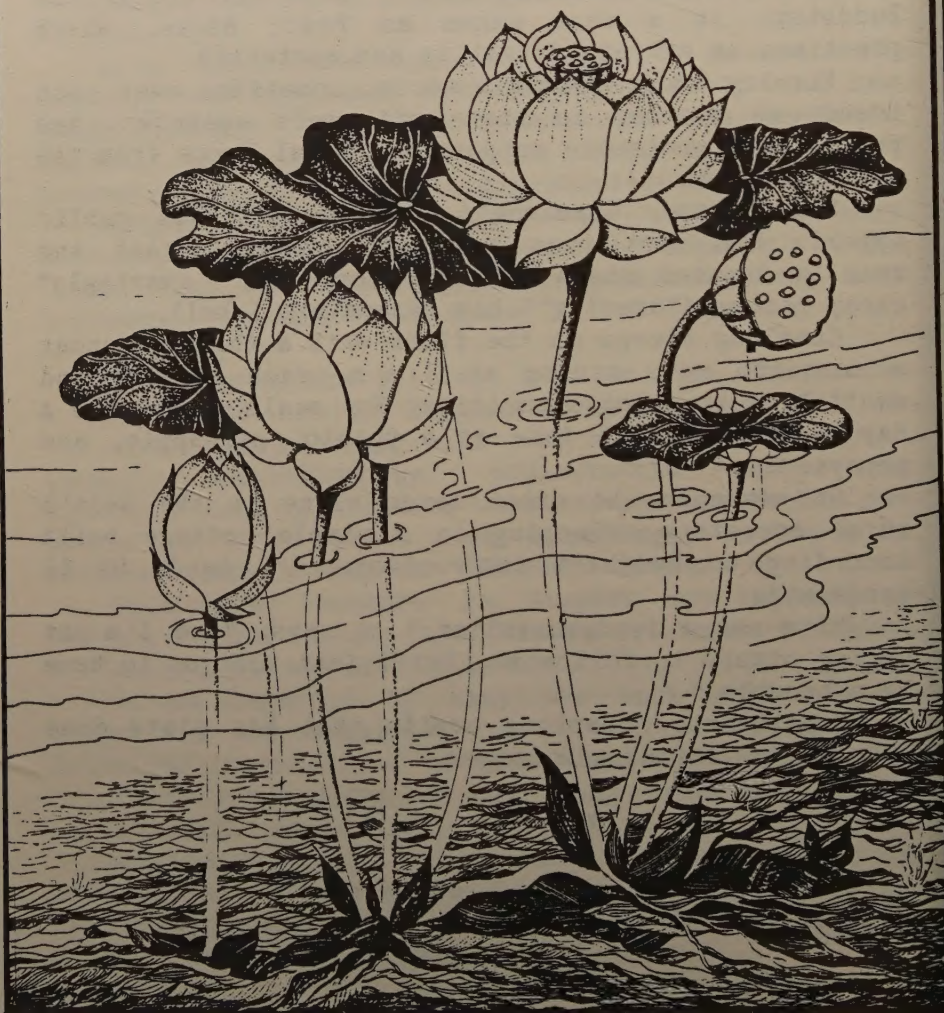
Chamlong sleeps on the floor with a thin mat under a mosquito net, rising at 3 a.m. each morning and meditating in a lotus position. For meals - only one a day - he eats such fare as a potato, pineapple, and papaya.

On weekends, he often lives alone in the sect's rural monastery, sleeping in a simple cottage built according to Buddha's instructions - 7 hands by 12 hands wide.

"I'm not a fundamentalist," he says, "and I'm not urging others to follow me. But I just want us to have less trouble."

Nonetheless, Chamlong admits that his piety does have its political advantages.

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# The Path of the Lotus

Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C

[The following article is reprinted from How To Grow A Lotus Blossom by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, M.O.B.C., (Mount Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1977), and appears here with her kind permission.]

The first step of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the beginning of the Fourth Noble Truth, is Right Understanding and this I must show in simple faith, gratitude and humility. To always be open to everything that the Lord of the House tells to, or shows, me, to be absolutely grateful for everything that happens since it is a means of teaching, to feel neither fear nor elation, never to exhibit pride of achievement, to know that training is endless even if one has reached Buddhahood - this is Right Understanding. But this description began inadequately for Right Understanding transcends all dimensions, space; its joy cannot be described.

Unless there is absolute faith and obedience to the Lord's Will there can be no Right Understanding and, without Right Understanding, there can be no Right Thought, nor can there be any other steps of the Noble Eightfold Path. I developed this understanding because I was willing to go on believing, even in the darkest place at death's door, in the sight of the Truth that I had in 1963. Throughout all the years of seeming darkness, hatred, ill-will and grief that followed that kensho I never doubted it. Thus, in those dark fourteen years was the seed of faith nourished, as is a seed in the dark earth, and that seed of faith grew and became the root, the axis mundi, Right Understanding, the Iron Man, the Fifth Column of Light which permeates the universe. How blessed are those seemingly dark years; I wrote of them in my diary hoping that, one day, someone going to Japan would be given pause; I wanted no one else to

be hurt as was I. How wrong can a person be? Without the difficulties that I encountered in Japan and England this seed of faith would have been weak and, when put to the test in the darkest place, could not have borne fruit. When reading through my diary I know that I wanted to publish it for all the wrong reasons; now perhaps it can be published so that those who read it may know the measure of faith needed to help them in their own darkest hour and learn to bless, rather than curse, adversity; for it is on adversity that the seed of faith, once it has been TRULY PLANTED by the Penetration of Heaven kensho thrives; it is as rain to a plant - adversity gives strength in the darkest hour and causes the one who has had kensho to show certainty of action.

This Right Understanding is the root of the lotus blossom - that from which the rest of the plant springs - that which enables the blossom to remain unwetted and unstained by the water that surrounds it whilst its roots remain in the mud; the roots of the lotus are nurtured in the mud just as Right Understanding can be nurtured in this world of delusion if only we use everything, including adversity, as an opportunity rather than an impediment to our training. Without those dark years there could have been no end to suffering, no finding of its cause and no certain knowledge of suffering's existence; there would, instead, have been the demi-life which is led by most people, a consciousness of dis-ease and a steady hardening of spirit and bitterness of mind as what seemed to be an inescapable inevitability was all that was known as life. I was not wrong to write the diary - only in wishing to publish it for the wrong reasons. If you would grow a lotus blossom you must plant the root of Right Understanding.

The second step of the Noble Eightfold Path is Right Thought and this is naturally the child of Right Understanding. When the understanding is True the thoughts become reality to the extent of taking shape and colour, thus confirming the rightness of understanding; but I must not cling to that shape and

colour any more than I must cling to emptiness. "Go in and out," we were told; "sometimes I raise the eyebrows of old Shakyamuni Buddha and sometimes I do not," said a great old master; these two sayings are the same; "we live in the world as if in the sky" is as this.

Right Thought is as the stem of the lotus, coming forth from the root of Right Understanding. Without that stem the plant is useless. Although hidden by the water I know it is there if a flower is visible; without it the flower will die. Just as there can be no stem without a root, so there can be no flower without a stem. Unseen both root and stem may be but, if there is a blossom. I know they are both there. If the blossom is always young and beautiful I know that the root and stem are healthy.

And what of the bud, Right Speech? Just as Right Thought comes out of Right Understanding, so is Right Speech the child of Right Thought. When the thought is wrong the speech becomes lying, coarse, irreverent, worrisome and incredible; when the stem becomes diseased because something has attacked the root, the lotus bud withers and dies. When faith is impaired, gratitude and joy die, thoughts become unreal, duality arises and there can be no trusting the speech of others let alone that of oneself.

Right Action is the result of Right Speech and Right Thought; it is the unfolding of the lotus flower. I may speak well but my actions must agree with that which I say otherwise I am as a bud that never blossoms. And if I do not blossom how can I cause others to wish to blossom? Right Livelihood for me is to be a monk; Right Livelihood for a lotus plant is to blossom - by so doing it causes men to gasp in wonder at its beauty and thus give praise, unknowingly, to the Lord of the House; by being a true monk I may cause others to wish to train themselves that they may know the Lord of the House and become truly free.

To this end I must put forth Right Effort. The lotus puts forth seeds to grow more lotus plants; a monk makes an effort to exhibit the Truth by keeping the Precepts so that others may seek the Lord of the House also. By being thus single-minded in our efforts, both I and the lotus will for ever exhibit Right Mindfulness and not be distracted from our true purpose.

What is our true purpose? It is to show the Lord in everything we do, say and think. Who is the Lord of the House? I am not the Lord of the House but there is nothing in me that is not of the Lord of the House. The lotus is not the Lord of the House but there is nothing in it that is not of the Lord of the House. Both the lotus and I and you are the Lord of the House and we must not usurp the position of the Lord of the House. This is Right Concentration.

I must warn the trainees to guard their thoughts and, above all, not to let the worm of doubt get at their faith. By the time lying and deceit have appeared the spiritual plant is in grave danger; already its root and stem are diseased. Always they must keep up their meditation; always they must keep the Precepts.

The lotus blossom does not pull its roots out of the mud to get to the Lord of the House; it is content to drink in His life-giving sun that it may strengthen its stem and roots and be fruitful and multiply. I must stay forever in meditation so that, by so doing, I may bathe eternally in the fountain of the Lord's love and wisdom thus causing others to wish to do the same. I must stay in the world as if in the sky, thus I may show the Lord's love and wisdom to all beings. Nirvana is indeed beautiful but I will not enter it until all know its unity with this world in which I live.

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# The Threefold Lotus Scripture

Rev. Daishin Morgan, M.O.B.C.

[This article and an occasional series of articles to appear in future issues are extracts from edited transcripts of a series of lectures recorded for the benefit of meditation groups. The translation used is The Threefold Lotus Sutra by Bruno Kato and W.E. Soothill et al., published by Weatherhill. Passages are quoted by kind permission of the copyright holders Rissho Kosei-kai. Readers are strongly advised to study this translation and not rely on these notes alone for a clear insight into this scripture. D.M.]

## Chapter Two.

### Tactfulness.

This is the most important chapter in the first half of the Scripture, one of the main purposes of which is to teach and encourage Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas to leave behind their limited understanding and realise the One Vehicle way of the Bodhisattva. The Buddha stresses that the desire to enter the One Vehicle Way is all-important and those who are willing to follow His teaching will indeed do so.

In the early part of this chapter the Buddha states that there is more to the teaching than Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas can comprehend. There are depths to the teaching that no one in the assembly has yet understood for, up to now, the Buddha has not yet revealed the One Vehicle. In other words, the teaching that the Buddha has given up to this point has been an expedient used to bring the disciples to the point at which they can comprehend the deepest teaching. Of this deepest teaching the Buddha says, "Only a Buddha together with a Buddha can fathom the reality of all existence." It is not enough to hear and practise the teaching; we must, at the same time, know that our

true nature and the Buddha are one. We must be willing to become Buddha with all the implications for our personal life that this implies. We already have the heart of Buddha; we must commit ourselves utterly to living from that heart. To do this we must have such faith in the Eternal and in our own Buddha Nature that nothing else is relied upon. However, even the great Bodhisattvas cannot contain the Buddha Nature; they can only be enfolded by it. It is never a possession and in this sense can never be attained.

"I and other Buddhas in the universe  
Alone can understand these things.  
This Law is inexpressible,  
It is beyond the realm of terms;  
Among all the other living beings  
None can apprehend it  
Except the Bodhisattvas  
Who are firm in the power of faith.  
The disciples of all the Buddhas  
Who have offered worship to all the Buddhas  
And have ended all their faults  
And dwell in this last bodily state,  
Such men as these  
Have not powers equal [to such knowledge].  
Though the world were full  
Of beings like Sariputra  
Who with utmost thought combined to measure it  
They could not fathom the Buddha-wisdom."

Sariputra then asks the Buddha to explain His meaning, as doubts have arisen in his mind and in the minds of those in the assembly. The Buddha is reluctant to explain, but Sariputra asks three times. At first the Buddha says,

"My Law is subtle and inscrutable;  
Those who are haughty  
On hearing would not believe it respectfully."

When the Buddha does consent to explain it, five thousand of the assembly depart because,

They imagined that they had attained what they had not attained and had proved what they had not proved. In such error as this they would not stay; and the World-honoured One was silent and did not stop them.

The Buddha then says:

"Now in this congregation I am free from [useless] twigs and leaves, and have nothing but all that are true and real. It is good ... that such extremely haughty ones as those are gone away. Now carefully listen and I will expound...."

The Buddha reveals that there is only the One Buddha Vehicle; the other vehicles are shown to be only temporary and expedient, for use only until He reveals the final Truth. All the Teachings of the Buddha are in order to secure perfect knowledge of the One Buddha Vehicle.

"Sariputra! In the whole universe there are not even two vehicles, how much less a third."

Because of this teaching *The Lotus Scripture* is sometimes referred to as the "One Vehicle Scripture".

Who then is able to enter the Buddha Way? It seems that, in the opening part of the chapter, the Buddha says that even Bodhisattvas united in one mind cannot compass it but Bodhisattvas firm in virtue and practice can enter the Buddha-way provided they have humility. In the last verse section the Buddha expounds further on this to say that those who have walked this profound and mystic way will accomplish the Buddha-way.

The expedient vehicles are the means of arousing the faith to turn to the Buddha in His unlimited form. Now that the Buddha-way has been established the Buddha teaches only by its means, having made a vow that all creatures rank equally with Him. All are

Buddha and to teach anything else is to lead beings astray. Even though the Buddha preaches to them, some remain confused and stuck with their attachments to the five desires and are accordingly forced to transmigrate in the six realms, undergoing great suffering. It was for these beings that the tactful way was set up. Those who worship images, respect the Buddha or make images, even by tracing them in the sand:-

All such ones as these,  
Gradually accumulate merit  
And perfecting hearts of great pity,  
Have attained the Buddha-way;  
Indeed, by influencing the Bodhisattvas,  
Have saved countless creatures.

It is part of the Buddha-way to take whatever a being is able to offer and use it to set them upon the Buddha-way.

Though the Buddhas in future ages  
Proclaim hundreds, thousands, kotis,  
Countless schools of doctrine,  
In reality they are [but] the One Vehicle.

After His enlightenment, The Buddha was reluctant to offer His teaching as He saw that all beings were caught up in delusion and that they would misunderstand; but, encouraged by the Four Heavenly Kings and the Buddhas of the past He resolved to preach the Three Vehicles in order to save such beings.

"Those of little wisdom delight in petty laws,  
Not believing that they can become Buddhas."

To those who hear the Law and practise it the Buddha says,

"[But] you already know  
The expedient tactful ways of  
The Buddhas, the leaders of the world.

Have no further doubts;  
Rejoice greatly in your hearts,  
Knowing that you will become Buddhas."

Within this chapter there is a distinction made between 'nirvana' that the Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas think they have attained and real nirvana which is to have realised Buddha-wisdom and the supreme way. "Unreal nirvana" is a necessary preliminary consisting of the extinction of fault, but must not be mistaken for true nirvana. This teaching is amplified in the next chapter with the parable of the burning house.

Such importance is given to the teaching on the tactful method of the Buddha because it marks the transition from the small vehicle law to the infinite, all-embracing Mahayana mind. The One Vehicle does not depend on petty rules; it is open to all who are prepared to approach with the heart of faith. Even the offering of a flower to a Buddha statue, made with a distracted mind, is part of the One-vehicle Way and will lead eventually to the perfection of Buddhahood. The discriminatory mind, which views things in terms of what is adequate and what is not, will divide the world into the saved and the unsaved. The Buddha-wisdom sees the purity of heart of all beings, it goes beyond judgement and condemnation. Thus it is only by means of the One-vehicle Way that the Bodhisattvas are able to save sentient beings. The ability to see beyond this world of form, to see what lies beyond the apparent opposites of male and female, layman and monk is a vital ingredient of the One Vehicle. This all-encompassing view discerns the purity of practice of others, even though they may act in ways that are not in accord with how the teaching appears to us. It is the practice of meditation in daily life, sitting still and knowing the Eternal in all things.

The One-vehicle Way is to seek the Eternal Buddha above everything else, it is to be content within the Eternal with whatever the Eternal asks. This is beyond fame and gain, it is even beyond Buddhism. Those who

cling to Hinayana interpretations of the rules do not know the One Vehicle and those who claim the One Vehicle but break the Precepts do terrible harm to themselves and others, from which it may take lifetimes to recover.

There is an important lesson contained within this chapter on how to listen to the Teaching. The haughty Sravakas who left the assembly when the Buddha proclaimed that there was greater depth to the Dharma than they had as yet comprehended reacted as many present-day disciples do when their teacher points out the need for them to go deeper. An inevitable consequence of opening oneself up to the deeper knowledge of how things are is that one must let go of the ideas and opinions upon which one's actions have been based up until that point. For example, we may assume that simply because we are capable of doing something, and we can see a need for that thing to be done, we should go ahead and do it. The result can often be that we end up doing so much out of a kind of pride, that we burn ourselves out. In fact we have listened to our hearts imperfectly, we have seen the need to work for the benefit of others but have not realised that such work must come from the mind of meditation if it is to be truly effective. A deeper commitment requires that we let go of the image of ourselves as the competent being on whom everyone can rely. Instead there is a need to be still and ask in meditation, "Am I doing good? Is this indeed the will of the Eternal Buddha that I do these things?" There are times when it is more compassionate to leave people to learn from their own mistakes rather than to rush in to help like a knight in shining armour. However, when a teacher points out the problem and tells us that we are making a mistake it can very easily seem, when looked at from the standpoint of our old opinion, that the teacher is telling us not to help others. If we are caught up in the image of ourselves as someone who helps others, pride can prevent us from hearing what the teacher is really saying. We need to have the humility to realise that we could be wrong.

In the Scripture the Buddha points out how much more work the assembly needs to do by explaining how deep the Buddha's wisdom is. Some of the assembly believe that they have already attained nirvana and their pride prevents them from hearing what the Buddha has to say. This happens in the spiritual life when the disciple, usually after having some experience of meditation, begins to believe that they are the equal of their master in a manner that denies the vertical transmission. The other side of the same problem appears if the master should point out something that the disciple does not know and this is taken by the disciple to mean that they are inadequate. Because the disciple does not yet know what it means to be one with the Eternal and has not let go of the self completely, they have not yet found their true adequacy and needlessly cling to false ideas of an ego-centred adequacy. The result is conflict with the Master, and this is how ambition and pride cause the downfall of many trainees. Ambition can only get a hold on you when you have a fundamental doubt about your Buddha Nature, your place within the Eternal. If you give up everything you gain true adequacy, for 'you' are no longer getting in the way and truly the Buddha does all. To know and live in this place it is necessary to make a practice of giving up the self every day of your life. In order not to fall into this mistake, each night I recite to myself the Three Refuges. "I take refuge in the Buddha" means that I offer the sense of me, self-importance, ambition, desires to be famous, liked and respected - all these things - are offered to the Eternal Buddha. One of the signs of enlightenment, in fact the chief sign of enlightenment, is gratitude. Pride and ambition block this and prevent true respect for the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It is easy to follow the teaching when it agrees with our opinions; to be willing to drop those opinions and follow the teaching is a sign of true faith.

Because Sariputra and the others who are willing to listen stay in the assembly, they have the incomparable benefit of being able to hear the

Teaching. This chapter, like chapter one and the following dozen chapters, is setting the scene, preparing the ground for the revelation of the true nature of the Buddha that comes in the second half of the Scripture. The emphasis is placed on tactful means because there are many, even today, who believe that all there is to Buddhism is the cessation of suffering and the extinction of self. It is necessary to find this place, but the Scripture points out that mere cessation is not the point; the point is to become Buddha. Becoming Buddha is a real potential because this very body and mind is the Buddha's own body and mind, having its roots as it does within the Eternal. Because so many had heard the first part of the Buddha's Teaching, contained, by and large, within the Pali Scriptures, and had thought that that was all there was, it became necessary to point out that those teachings are not the final teaching, that they are one of the skilful means of the Buddha to prepare the way for the deeper revelations that are to come later. However, those early teachings are not invalidated. Far from it. They are true and necessary and should be carefully studied. As *The Lotus Scripture* points out, all the Buddha's words are true and not false: He does not lead people astray; but the mind of the disciple must remain open and fluid; there is never an end to the ever deepening teaching of the Buddha.

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# A Look at the Kalama Sutta

Bhikkhu Bodhi

[This article previously appeared in the Buddhist Publication Society Newsletter of Kandy, Sri Lanka, and appears here with the kind permission of the author.]

In this essay we will be taking a fresh look at an often quoted discourse of the Buddha, the Kalama Sutta. The discourse has been described as "the Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry," and though the discourse certainly does counter the decrees of dogmatism and blind faith with a vigorous call for free investigation, it is problematic whether the sutta can support all the positions that have been ascribed to it. On the basis of a single passage, quoted out of context, the Buddha has been made out to be a pragmatic empiricist who dismisses all doctrine and faith, and whose Dhamma is simply a freethinker's kit to truth which invites each one to accept or reject whatever he likes.

But does the Kalama Sutta really justify such views? Or do we meet in these claims just another set of variations on that egregious old tendency to interpret the Dhamma according to whatever notions are congenial to oneself - or to those to whom one is preaching? Let us take as careful a look at the Kalama Sutta as the limited space allotted to this essay will allow, remembering that in order to understand the Buddha's utterances correctly it is essential to take account of his own intentions in making them.

The passage that has been cited so often runs as follows:

"Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing, nor upon tradition, nor upon rumour, nor upon scripture, nor upon surmise, nor upon axiom,

*nor upon specious reasoning, nor upon bias towards a notion pondered over, nor upon another's seeming ability, nor upon the consideration 'The monk is our teacher.' When you yourselves know: 'These things are bad, blameable, censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and to ill,' abandon them... When you yourselves know: 'These things are good, blameless, praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness,' enter on and abide in them."*

Now this passage, like everything else spoken by the Buddha, has been stated in a specific context - with a particular audience and situation in view - and thus must be understood in relation to that context. The Kalamas, citizens of the town of Kesaputta, had been visited by religious teachers of divergent views, each of whom would propound his own doctrines and tear down the doctrines of his predecessors. This left the Kalamas perplexed, and thus when "the recluse Gotama," reputed to be an Awakened One, arrived in their township, they approached him in the hope that he may be able to dispel their confusion. From the subsequent development of the sutta, it is clear that the issues that perplexed them were the reality of rebirth and kammic retribution for good and evil deeds.

The Buddha begins by assuring the Kalamas that under such circumstances it is proper for them to doubt, an assurance which encourages free enquiry. He next speaks the passage quoted above, advising the Kalamas to abandon those things they know for themselves to be bad and to undertake those things they know for themselves to be good. This advice can be dangerous if given to those whose ethical sense is undeveloped, and we can thus assume that the Buddha regarded the Kalamas as people of refined sensitivity. In any case he did not leave them wholly to their own resources, but by questioning them led them to see that greed, hate and delusion, being conducive to harm and to suffering for oneself and others, are to be

abandoned, and their opposites, being beneficial to all, are to be developed.

The Buddha next explains that a "noble disciple devoid of covetousness and ill will, undeluded" dwells pervading the world with boundless loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity. Thus purified of hate and malice, he enjoys here and now four "solaces:" if there is an afterlife and kammic result, he will undergo a pleasant rebirth, while if there is none he still lives happily here and now; if evil results befall an evil-doer, then no evil will befall him, and if evil results do not befall an evil-doer, then he is purified anyway. With this the Kalamas express their appreciation of the Buddha's discourse and go for refuge to the Triple Gem.

Now does the Kalama Sutta suggest, as is often held, that a follower of the Buddhist path can dispense with all faith and doctrine, that he should make his own personal experience the criterion for judging the Buddha's utterances and for rejecting what cannot be squared with it? It is true that the Buddha does not ask the Kalamas to accept anything he says out of confidence in himself, but let us note one important point: the Kalamas, at the start of the discourse, were not the Buddha's disciples. They approached him merely as a counsellor who might help dispel their doubts, but they did not come to him as the Tathagata, the Truth-finder, who might show them the way to spiritual progress and to final liberation.

Thus, because the Kalamas had not yet come to accept the Buddha in terms of his unique mission, as the discloser of the liberating Truth, it would not have been in place for him to expound to them the Dhamma unique to his own Dispensation: such teachings as the Four Noble Truths, the three characteristics, and the methods of contemplation based upon them. These teachings are specifically intended for those who have accepted the Buddha as their guide to deliverance, and in the Suttas he expounds them only to those who "have gained faith in the Tathagata" and

who possess the perspective necessary to grasp them and apply them. The Kalamas, however, at the start of the discourse are not yet fertile soil for him to sow the seeds of his liberating message. Still confused by the conflicting claims to which they had been exposed, they are not yet clear even about the groundwork of morality.

Nevertheless, after advising the Kalamas not to rely upon established tradition, abstract reasoning, and charismatic gurus, the Buddha proposes to them a teaching that is immediately verifiable and capable of laying a firm foundation for a life of moral discipline and mental purification. He shows that whether or not there be another life after death, a life of moral restraint and of love and compassion for all beings brings its own intrinsic rewards here and now, a happiness and sense of inward security far superior to the fragile pleasures that can be won by violating moral principles and indulging the mind's desires. For those who are not concerned to look further, who are not prepared to adopt any convictions about a future life and worlds beyond the present one, such a teaching will ensure their present welfare and their safe passage to a pleasant rebirth - provided that they do not fall into the wrong view of denying an afterlife and kammic causation.

However, for those whose vision is capable of widening to encompass the broader horizons of our existence, this teaching given to the Kalamas points beyond its immediate implications to the very core of the Dhamma. For the three states brought forth for examination by the Buddha - greed, hate and delusion - are not merely grounds of wrong conduct or moral stains upon the mind. Within his teaching's own framework they are the root defilements - the primary causes of all bondage and suffering - and the entire practice of the Dhamma can be viewed as the task of eradicating these evil roots by developing to perfection their antidotes - dispassion, kindness and wisdom.

Thus the discourses to the Kalamas offers an acid test for gaining confidence in the Dhamma as a viable doctrine of deliverance. We begin with an immediately verifiable teaching whose validity can be attested by anyone with the moral integrity to follow it through to its conclusions, namely, that the defilements cause harm and suffering both personal and social, that their removal brings peace and happiness, and that the practices taught by the Buddha are effective means for achieving their removal. By putting this teaching to a personal test, with only a provisional trust in the Buddha as one's collateral, one eventually arrives at an experientially grounded confidence in the liberating and purifying power of the Dhamma. This increased confidence in the teaching brings along a deepened faith in the Buddha as teacher, and thus disposes one to accept on trust those principles he enunciates that are relevant to the quest for awakening, even when they lie beyond one's own capacity for verification. This, in fact, marks the acquisition of right view, in its preliminary role as the forerunner of the entire Noble Eightfold Path

Partly in reaction to dogmatic religion, partly in subservience to the reigning paradigm of objective scientific knowledge, it has become fashionable to hold, by appeal to the Kalama Sutta, that the Buddha's teaching dispenses with faith and formulated doctrine and asks us to accept only what we can personally verify. This interpretation of the Sutta, however, forgets that the advice the Buddha gave the Kalamas was contingent upon the understanding that they were not yet prepared to place faith in him and his doctrine; it also forgets that the sutta omits, for that very reason, all mention of right view and of the entire perspective that opens up when right view is acquired. It offers instead the most reasonable counsel on wholesome living possible when the issue of ultimate beliefs has been put into brackets.

What can be justly maintained is that those aspects of the Buddha's teaching that come within the purview of our ordinary experience can be personally

confirmed within experience, and that this confirmation provides a sound basis for placing faith in those aspects of the teaching that necessarily transcend ordinary experience. Faith in the Buddha's teaching is never regarded as an end in itself nor as a sufficient guarantee of liberation, but only as the starting point for an evolving process of inner transformation that comes to fulfilment in personal insight. But in order for this insight to exercise a truly liberative function, it must unfold in the context of an accurate grasp of the essential truths concerning our situation in the world and in the domain where deliverance is to be sought. These truths have been imparted to us by the Buddha out of his own profound comprehension of the human condition. To accept them in trust after careful consideration is to set foot on a journey which transforms faith into wisdom, confidence into certainty, and culminates in liberation from suffering.

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# When the Opposites Arise, the Buddha Mind is Lost

Rev. Mokugen Kublicki, M.O.B.C.

At the Priory the sound of bells, gongs and drum punctuate the hours of the day. They call trainees to rise, to meditation, to meals and to work. When one hears the sound of the bell, one brings the hands together in gassho and moves onwards to the next activity. Not only do these sounds have a practical purpose in that they allow the community to work together in harmony, but they also have an important spiritual meaning.

The sound of the bell is as the call of the Eternal. It is the movement of our heart, and the heart of all beings is purity and truth. Within each of us is the intuitive knowledge of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and the longing to cease from evil, to do only good and to do good for others. This birthright is as pure and refreshing as cool, sparkling, spring water and as simple and penetrating as the sound of a bell. A bell can be heard in all directions, and the voice of the Eternal, - the pure activity of love, compassion and wisdom reaches the farthest quarter. We can choose to be one with the Eternal by responding wholeheartedly with our body, speech and heart. This is to know true joy.

The sound of the bell is as the call of the Eternal; our immediate heart-felt response is the answer. Often however we hesitate; we allow a gap to open between the call and the answer. If we are not vigilant the self arises and we experience what may feel like a separation. If we are negligent that gap can grow into a seeming chasm and we can even start believing that there never was a call. Our true purpose is forgotten and we start filling our time with useless activity. Doubt arises, we dodge responsibilities, we chase after things that are ultimately not satisfying, clinging to things that

burst like bubbles in our hands. Even the best made of worldly plans have an end and it is not surprising that we can feel bitter, angry and disappointed. In 'Rules for Meditation' Great Master Dogen states: "...the separation would be as that between heaven and earth if even the slightest gap exists, for when the opposites arise the Buddha Mind is lost."

However, the call is always there, the Eternal is always present and no matter how wide the chasm may feel we can never be truly separated or abandoned. We just need to be still within our own hearts and trust.

Sometimes when we first come to training it can seem as if we have to re-learn everything. Old patterns of thought and behaviour no longer work because we have seen through the mirage of props that seemed so stable and are now known to be as a house built on shifting sands. This period when we realise that we still have much, indeed everything to learn, can be a little unnerving! We know that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are the True Refuge, yet we still find ourselves slow and hesitant. At this time we need to walk on with faith, humility and commitment. The old ways of thinking and doing can still arise to tempt us and we need great courage to be still, to recognise the truth and act on it. Past mistakes need to be forgiven and embraced, and we need to walk on. Faith, humility and commitment are aspects of an 'Iron Being' and "the merit of first mind is the widest and most completely fathomless . . ."

The call of the Eternal then, gives us the opportunity to respond by getting the self out of the way. Sometimes this can be done instantly, and sometimes some negative aspect of ourselves needs diligent work and patience. However our willingness and best effort is the answer to the call. By emptying ourselves of attachments, selfish opinions and judgementalism we close the gap between 'heaven and earth' and the Buddha Land is found beneath our feet. By being still in our true heart the Buddha Land is found even in the midst of suffering. Thus Dogen

states that "should you be able to find the Buddha within birth and death, they both vanish," and Acalanatha the Immovable Bodhisattva of fearless wisdom and determination, stands unhurt and indestructible amidst the flames of greed, hate and delusion. The scriptures state that our life must be spent in self-less activity with no waste of time whatsoever. The waste of time is the doubting of the Buddha Nature within our own hearts. To answer the call of the Eternal then, is to take complete responsibility for our lives by making the Precepts our blood and bones, and to drop our selfish concerns by wholly embracing them within meditation. By neither rejecting nor clinging to them they cease to dominate our hearts. By being willing to face, embrace and learn from our past mistakes, they no longer need to bind us. There may be consequences to be dealt with but our hearts will be at peace.

In the monastery the schedule is arranged so that events flow smoothly one to the next; the invitation of the bell rings out clearly. This gives the monks and lay-trainees an excellent opportunity to learn how to act with faith and certainty: to not allow a 'gap' to open and the Buddha Mind to be lost. Heaven and earth are one; there is no need to sit and think about it: just there are animals to be fed, dishes to be washed, menus to be planned and guests to be welcomed. And meditation is the important key-stone of all activity.

Often visitors to the monastery can be surprised that the schedule is changed, an emphasis shifted or the unexpected happens. Life goes on much the same in a monastery as anywhere else and the lesson to be clearly learnt is that one cannot hang on to forms and schedules. We learn within forms that the true spirit of emptiness or selflessness is to be found within. The forms that initially seem to point the way, when carried out in the right spirit, are themselves expressions of the unceasing flow of the Eternal. It is only by bowing that we learn what it truly means to bow. By joining in with such a schedule, even for a

short time, one can obtain a valuable insight into how to meditate in daily life. All activities, whether at home, at leisure, at the office or in the meditation hall are then seen as an opportunity to close the gap between heaven and earth. One can learn how to find true peace.

The call of the Eternal may come in many different guises. However many different beings there are, so there are appropriate paths to follow, needs to respond to and karma to be cleansed. We need to become so willing and still that we hear the call of the Eternal in the most mundane place, in that which is right before our very eyes. Superficial appearances can be deceptive. Sometimes the sound of the bell in the monastery can be soft and melodious and sometimes the striking of wooden clappers shatter through the silence. At times we learn from things that appear gentle and compassionate and at other times we learn from our own bitter experience and mistakes. Nothing is to be discarded, as all things teach and point directly to the Truth. It is not always easy to see, but if we are still, we can know the compassion of the Eternal even in the darkest suffering. The suffering itself is teaching us to take refuge in something deeper than our own fleeting emotions and feelings. With an open mind and trusting heart we can clearly see signposts pointing the way - whichever way we may turn. The teaching of fearless determination is to be found within the flames of suffering, and the Bodhisattva of Compassion can be recognized in anyone who offers us assistance. Wisdom is to be found within the stillness of meditation, and True Love can be recognized in the generosity of our fellow trainees.

Thus we need to answer the call of the Eternal - offer all that we have and are, offer up all our imperfections and selfishness, offer up all our gifts and virtues, and know that these are not separate gifts but the complete offering of ourselves to That Which Is. In this giving, of itself the greatest gift, and the acceptance of the Lord of the House as True Master, whatever suffering there is, is turned into

the joy of knowing that there is something greater. To be willing not to hang on to anything, nor to push anything away is the true acceptance. By accepting suffering, by accepting the responsibility to clean up our karma, we truly call upon the Eternal to do His work within us, and then there is no birth and death, no light and dark, nor joy nor suffering. When we thus close the gap between heaven and earth and unselfconsciously follow the will of the Eternal, there is actually no difference between That Which Calls and That Which Answers. There is just the ceaseless flowing of the Life of Buddha.

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# Everything is an Altar

Chris Barker

During a recent retreat at the Priory I was assigned to do kitchen clean-up. All seemed to be going well when I suddenly heard a monk's voice. "Would you mind putting the knives and forks down gently please." I realised, in that instant, that I had just dumped a bundle of cutlery rather abruptly onto the draining board. It was like moments in meditation when I suddenly 'come to' and realise that I have not really been aware at all; or when reciting a scripture I realise that I have been voicing the words but my mind has been altogether somewhere else! On this occasion, while at the sink, I imagine I was musing about being given what I considered to be the 'important' job of washing dishes rather than some more 'menial' task. The ego was asserting itself again through comparing and judging. How easily it happens.

The monk's remark made me pause a moment. Without my realising it I had lost sight of why I was doing the job in the first place. I made gassho, being inwardly thankful for the monk's intervention. It reminded me of a previous occurrence when a fellow lay-trainee had received a similar request. On that occasion the monk went on to explain: "You see, we like to think of the sink as an altar ..." That phrase has stayed with me for a long time. As with many things in Buddhism it's the answer that you least expect that really makes you sit up and take notice. It cuts through the immediate intellectual desire to analyse the teaching rationally, rather than just see it for what it is.

There cannot be many things which are considered to be more commonplace than a kitchen sink and yet it can become a symbol and focal point for one's training. It is then easy to realise that every other aspect of one's day, whether at home or at work, are

really just like the sink - writing a letter, sitting in the bus, making the effort to chat to people, marking homework, doing repairs, withholding an opinion, not withholding an opinion, planning for tomorrow ... the list is endless and varied. Some things may be quite easy to do whereas others can appear more demanding and require us to overcome our natural inclination to avoid them. Seen from the right place, however, when we look at each moment for itself, everything can be an altar.

At that time I was finding it particularly difficult to appreciate what it meant to "offer things up." It seemed to be a phrase that was so often referred to in classes and in the Journal articles I was reading. I could accept the idea of offering incense and tangible things on the altar in the meditation hall, but it seemed strange that I could also make an offering of my thoughts and feelings and reactions to things. All the more so when these were aspects of my character that I was in some way ashamed of. It never seemed right. Making an offering out of my moments of laziness, forgetfulness, or doubt, always seemed as if the Eternal was getting a very poor deal! I suppose this is how inadequacy can appear. Yet if we can make an altar out of the kitchen sink, the act of offering can be in essence an acceptance and willingness to train: to keep our minds alert to the potential that each moment holds, to realise that we do make mistakes and, if so, to resolve to try harder next time.

I feel it must be an aspect of the Compassion of the Cosmic Buddha that, despite our past mistakes, we are given so many opportunities to continue our training. I was sitting once on the bank of the West Allen, down in the valley in front of the Priory, watching the water in the brook tumbling over all the stones and small boulders in its path. It first hit one stone, then another, then on to another, in a series of unending movements all the way downstream. It never returned to hit the same stone twice. Each moment came and went and was gone.

I know that one can see this as a recipe for despair or even a convenient excuse not to bother. So often in daily life I find that opportunities come and go without my having made the most of them. I see that I could have handled that situation differently, or just said "Hello" to the person opposite, or not got so worked up about something which now seems so unnecessary. And yet when I look back worrying about these past events, I find it's because I'm really looking too far ahead, thinking of all the consequences that might be involved - an unwillingness to let go of the idea that I must protect myself.

Yet new opportunities in which to be still arise all the time. Everything is moving on. Each moment is new. If we ignore an opportunity here, or go wrong there, limitless other occasions will arise when we can face whatever the altar happens to be at that particular moment and choose to follow our Buddha Nature. Everything *does* become an altar when we put ourselves aside and try to see the Buddha first in every situation. In the next moment a new altar appears and the offering we *make* is to get on and do what has to be done.

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# Newcastle Zen Group

Dave Hurcombe, Lay Minister, O.B.C.

The Newcastle Zen Group is a group of lay people from all over Tyneside and beyond who wish to follow Soto Zen Buddhist practice and meditate together. The group is affiliated to and follows the same spirit, ceremonial forms and rules as Throssel Hole Priory. The group also acts as a local focus of support for the Priory and its members are able to regularly attend and benefit from the many retreats and Festivals held there.

The Newcastle Zen Group, as it is presently formed, has been meeting once a week on Thursday evenings since 1981. The group has met in a variety of locations in Newcastle but for the last two years has been meeting at the home of a Lay Minister where there is a meditation room with the group's own permanent altar.

The group meets every Thursday evening between 7.00 pm and 9.15 pm. The evening starts with Evening Service followed by two 20 minute periods of sitting meditation with a short period of walking meditation in between. This is followed by Vespers and the evening finishes with having tea together. This provides an opportunity to relax and socialise whilst keeping still within the heart of meditation. Twice a month whilst having tea together, the group also listens to tape lectures which are kindly provided to meditation groups all over the country by the Priory. These tapes are then added to the growing tape and book library available to members. Periodically a monk is invited to lead the Thursday evening meditation and this is usually followed by a short talk and questions.

In addition to regular Thursday evening meetings, the group may be starting to meet again on Saturday or

Sunday mornings for sitting meditation and Short Morning Service.

A variety of other activities are also regularly organised including trips to the Priory (to all the Lotus Ceremonies or Festivals when transport permits); inviting monks to Newcastle to give public talks or to lead one-day meditation retreats; and social get-togethers and outings. A news-letter is also regularly produced to keep everyone in touch with planned events. This is especially helpful to those who cannot always regularly attend group meetings because of other commitments.

The Newcastle Group is very fortunate in being so close to the Priory (it is about 45 miles from Newcastle to the Priory) and so can have regular contact. We are also fortunate in having our own meditation room and altar. Many members have worked hard together to make this room a suitable environment for meditation and the altar as beautiful and dignified as possible. It always feels good when congregation members work together in this way. This can be a way in which we can express our willingness to train and make it an offering for the benefit of all beings.

One member has recently finished making a lovely gold-leafed Buddha statue for our altar and on July 14 Rev. Jigen Bartley and Rev. Alfrid visited the group to lead the Ceremony of 'Opening the Eyes of the Buddha' for the new statue. During this ceremony a scroll of the Scripture of Great Wisdom was placed inside the statue. Rev. Jigen and Rev. Alfrid also lead a house blessing ceremony during which there was a procession around the house. Each place was opened to receive the perfume of the incense that was offered. The house has been given the name "Hebban," an old English word meaning to lift or raise up - in a Buddhist sense "to offer up."

Other recent events have included a one-day retreat in Newcastle on Saturday 10th. September lead



by a monk from the Priory, and an outing and picnic to some local woods on Sunday 18th. Seven members, their families and friends including 5 children and 2 dogs attended! The weather for this outing was splendid and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Some members of the group have also starting meeting regularly to practise singing. Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett has recently compiled and published The Liturgy of the O.B.C. for the Laity and we are learning the soprano, alto, tenor and bass parts to the beautiful music of the scriptures.

The group is presently in the middle of organising a local jumble sale to raise funds for the Priory. With events such as these, what is important is not the amount of money raised but the willingness to give of ourselves in whatever way will be of help to the monastic and lay Sangha. We have found that such events become a valuable means for the group (and

friends and families) to work together and to get to know one another outside of the more formal meditation meetings.

The Sangha is an ever growing and blossoming Bodhi tree and we are all grateful for the wonderful opportunity to be a part of and take Refuge in the growing Buddhist 'family.'

All meditation groups have to find their own ways and means which work best within their own circumstances. It is hoped that the above brief description of some of the activities of the Newcastle group will be of help to other meditation groups, or to those thinking of forming or joining such a group.

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# NEWS

We are pleased to announce that with Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett's blessing we shall be going ahead with plans to open a Priory in southern England. For a number of years, members of our congregation living many travelling hours away from Throssel Hole Priory have shown much interest in and enthusiasm for such a venture. We are pleased that our teaching programme will be extended more fully to our southern friends and any new trainees who may be interested in the Serene Reflection Meditation School (Soto Zen).

Currently, however, we do not have a suitable property, nor have we decided upon the actual location. We welcome an early response from all those interested, as to where they feel the Priory would be most usefully situated. It is unlikely that we will be able to afford to rent or buy large premises at present, so we are hoping for a property which will provide accomodation for one or two monks, a suitable sized hall for meditation, and a common room. Any suggestions, offers of help, and financial contributions will be gratefully received, and we shall do our best to take account of any recommendations. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Monastic Events:** On Tuesday 22nd. November, Geoffrey Hardcastle was ordained by Rev. Master Daishin Morgan, and received the name Houn Alexander, which means the Helper of Men. Rev. Alexander's parents Mr. & Mrs. Hardcastle were present at the ceremony as well as his sister Mrs. Mary Jones. After an ordination ceremony, new ordinees formally enter and are welcomed into the monk's meditation hall. The Assistant Disciplinarian announces:

*"The new trainee Houn .... , wishes to enter this meditation hall in order to find the Eternal. Please accept and greet him/her with joy."*

The new ordinees offer incense and bow at the altar, are led around the hall in order to offer and

receive the greetings of the Abbot and all trainees, and are then shown to their meditation seats where they make three bows of gratitude.

On November 2nd, Christopher Watson of Loughborough joined the community as a postulant. We welcome both Rev. Alexander and Chris and wish them success in their training

In early February we look forward to the return of Rev. Chushin Passmore, F.O.B.C., who has been training at Shasta Abbey for the past year.

**Festival Ceremonies and Memorials:** Lotus Ceremonies were held on the 6th and 27th of November and on the 2nd of November, 40 guests joined us in celebrating the Festival Memorial of Great Master Engaku Bodhidharma. Great Master Bodhidharma is the twenty-eighth person in our lineage after Shakyamuni Buddha and is known for transmitting Buddhism from India to China. He clearly demonstrated that the truth is not to be found in fruitless discussion but in the stillness of meditation and in the keeping of the Precepts.

On Nov. 1st we were able to show our gratitude to another of our Ancestors by celebrating Founder's day in honour of Great Master Keido Chisan Koho Zenji, the Transmission Master of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. Without the courage, determination, and wisdom - born of deep meditation - of those who came before us, Throssel Hole Priory would not exist today, so with deep joy and gratitude we express our thanks.

On November 13th we joined in spirit with the rest of the country by remembering those who have died in battle and a memorial service was held in their memory. Another important ceremony this autumn was the Festival of Feeding the Hungry Ghosts which was held at the end of the week long Segaki Retreat. This festival memorial is celebrated twice a year at the spring and autumn equinox for the transference of merit for those who have died and those in need.

On October 25th a memorial was held for Donald Peter Gribben, and on 19th November a memorial ceremony was held for Riva Marwick.

**Other Ceremonies:** On October 9th, Rev. Master Daishin was the Celebrant at the Lay Ordination of Tina Porter. In the Ceremony of Lay Ordination the ordinee makes a commitment to keeping the Precepts and is thus joined to the Buddhist family.

On Saturday November 12th the wedding was celebrated of Hazel Roebuck and Peter Hodgkinson.

We offer Tina, Hazel and Peter our congratulations.

**Lay Ministry News:** On 14th November Karen and David Richards qualified as Lay Ministers as did Angie Pedley and Duncan Sellers on November 20th. All received a certificate and the beautiful blue Lay Minister's rakhusu. Our best wishes go to Karen, David, Angie and Duncan; may their training continue to deepen.

**Outside Events:** The coming of autumn heralded a busy period of outside engagements on the Priory calendar

On September 17th, Rev. Master Daishin gave a talk on Buddhist Funerals at the Buddhist Hospice Conference in London, and on October 4th accepted the invitation of Nottinghamshire County Council Education Department to take part in the in-service course for teachers in religious education

Despite the colds and flus which hit most of the community early in the season, the Southern Teaching Tour was held as scheduled and many attended the varied events. Public talks were held in London, Milton Keynes and Chichister, and retreats and group meetings were held in London, Guildford and the Springhead Retreat Centre near Salisbury.

Also part of the autumn teaching schedule were public talks, retreats and group meetings in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, Nottingham, Leeds and Holland.

**Congregation Day:** A meeting of the congregation, their families and friends was held successfully in Birmingham in October last. Around 120 guests attended, and we were particularly pleased to be able to welcome Ven. Sayadaw Dr. Rewattadhamma and two monks

from Buddha Aneg Prasong of Perry Bar. On this day we celebrated the Festival of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva. Many people brought along pictures and scrolls of Avalokiteswara which were hung on the walls around the hall. During the circumambulation procession, trainees paused and bowed before each scroll, thus recognising and expressing gratitude for True Compassion which appears in many guises and in all places when we look with the eyes of meditation. Rev. Master Daishin gave a talk explaining the meaning of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva, and after the moving ceremony a buffet lunch was enjoyed by all. Although the Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Hall has served admirably for this occasion for the past three years, we are at present looking into the possibility of finding a venue which might also include rooms suitable for meditation so that the range of activities can be extended upon this day. Also, contrary to what had been announced, the 1989 Wesak Celebration of the Buddha's Birth will be held at Throssel Hole Priory, and the 1989 Congregation Day meeting will celebrate the Festival of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva. It will be held on September 16th. and the venue will be announced in the next Journal.

**Meditation Groups Weekend:** Rev. Edmund Cluett, O.B.C., our Guestmaster writes:

Fifty of our congregation members - the representatives of 26 meditation groups from all over Britain and Europe - gathered at the Priory over the weekend of 18th to 20th November for our first Groups Weekend. It was to be an opportunity for group members to meet each other in a less formal setting than usual in order to exchange ideas, and to discuss the potential difficulties that may be encountered in being part of a meditation group. Rev. Master Daishin gave two talks: one entitled, "The Purpose and Development of Meditation Groups," and the other, "The Purpose of Affiliation to the Priory." Both talks provoked lively discussion amongst the retreatants and the groups offered contributions and suggestions - contributions which were most useful and constructive. Apart from the talks and discussions about meditation

groups, two other classes were held: a class explaining how to teach meditation posture, and another where everyone was given the chance to practise (albeit for a short time), and ask questions about, precenting Morning and Mid-day Service. The Retreat ended on Sunday with the celebration of the Litanies Ceremony.

The weekend's programme was full and varied and certainly seemed to be successful. It is an event that we will be repeating in November 1989.

***Forthcoming Retreats and Sesshins:*** The Programme of events at the Priory from the middle of January to the end of March is as follows:

### INTRODUCTORY RETREATS

January	13-15 and 27-29
February	24-26
March	10-12

### WEEKEND RETREAT

February	10-12	"Compassion in Buddhism"
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### WEEK LONG RETREAT

March	20-27	The Keeping of the Ten Precepts Retreat (Jukai)
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### FESTIVALS AND SUNDAY LOTUS CEREMONIES

February	12	The Festival of Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva
February	15	The Festival of the Buddha's Death
February	21	The Festival of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva
March	5	Lotus Ceremony

For more information on any of the listed retreats and events and our full calendar of retreats and ceremonies, please write or phone The Guestmaster,

Throssel Hole Priory, Carrshield, Hexham,  
Northumberland NE47 8AL.

**Personal:** Linda Jones, one of our Lay Ministers resident at Tain in Scotland, would like to express her thanks to all those who sent cards and good wishes after a recent operation. We join in wishing Linda a speedy recovery to good health.

**Donations Received:** We are grateful for the wide assortment of donations for the various monastic departments. Amongst the many useful items received have been: silver candlesticks for the altar; a Buddhist scroll; 'silk' flowers; silk-screen calligraphies for the Lay Minister's rakhusus; a brass incense bowl; tassels, a variety of books, furniture, and household products; scissors and secateurs; an electric hob and suitcases.

There have been numerous donations of items of food and drink for the kitchen, and we would like to extend our thanks to Gillian Craig for offering to make the Priory's supply of tempeh.

Our thanks also go to members of the Newcastle Meditation Group who recently organised a jumble sale and donated the proceeds to the Priory.

**Donations Requested:** The kitchen has need of a large size pressure cooker to help cope with the ever growing number of guests, and the garden department would welcome hardy shrubs.

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.....Were it not for Shakyamuni we would have both forgotten and lost the Truth. When Shakyamuni was enlightened He said, "I was, am, and will be enlightened instantaneously with the universe" and now, as we hear these words, we are assured anew of our own Buddha Nature and our ability to enter the Path of Truth. When Shakyamuni died, He told His followers to make His teaching the light of their lives and to make their own lives shine as brilliantly as the sun; the light of Shakyamuni and His followers has shone through many centuries and has been Transmitted to many people. We must follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before us so that our own light shall shine in the same way, and we must Transmit it, even as they did, so that it may shine brightly in countless worlds and for thousands of lives to come.

*From the Enlightenment Day Offertory*

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